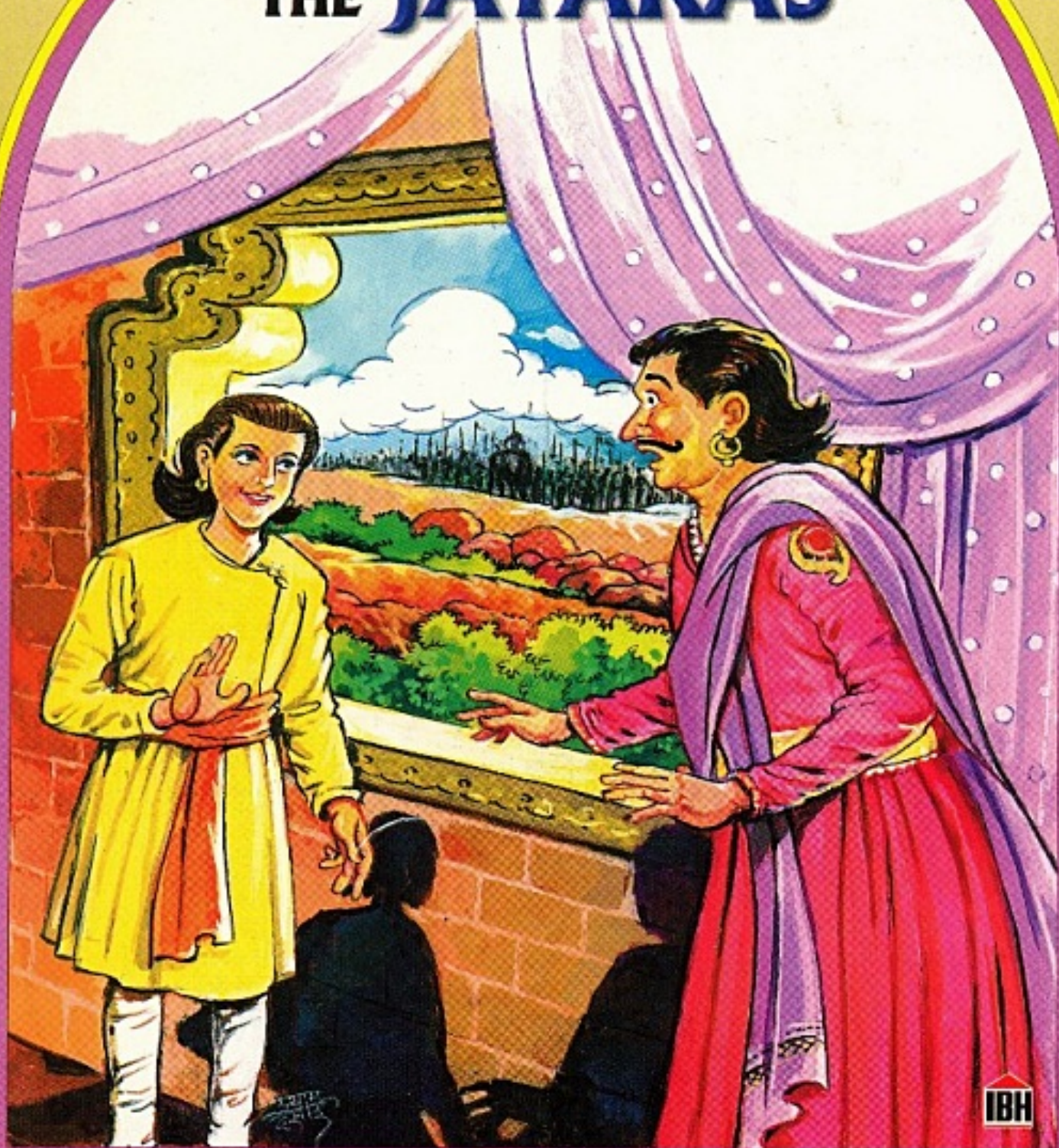




**SPECIAL
ISSUE**

No. 10017 Rs 70

MORE TALES FROM THE **JATAKAS**



IBH

MORE TALES FROM THE JATAKAS

All living creatures die to be born again, according to Hindu belief. Legend has it that several lifetimes as a Bodhisattva went into the making of the Buddha, the enlightened one.

The Bodhisattva came in many forms—man, monkey, deer, elephant, lion. Whatever his mortal frame, he spread the message of justice and wisdom, tempered with compassion. This wisdom of right thinking and right living is preserved in the Jataka Tales.

We cannot assign a definite date to the Jataka Tales. Taking into account archaeological and literary evidence, it appears that they were compiled between 300 B. C. and A. D. 500. They give us invaluable information about ancient Indian civilization, culture and thought.

According to Matha Ummagga Jataka, the Bodhisattva was once born as Aushadha Kumar, the son of Seth Shrivardhana of Yavamajjhaka.

The first two tales in this special issue recount the incidents in the life of Aushadha Kumar. The third tale is about the Queen of Mithila. She takes refuge in Kalachampa after her husband is killed in battle, and grooms her son to be a prince.

Editor : Anant Pai

<i>Title</i>	<i>Script</i>	<i>Illustrations</i>
Battle of Wits	Yagya Sharma	Ram Waerker
The Deadly Feast	Yagya Sharma	Ram Waerker
The Hidden Treasure	Meera Ugra	M. N. Nangare

Editor : Anant Pai

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Battle of Wits



LONG LONG AGO MITHILA WAS RULED BY A KING NAMED VAIDEHA. ONE NIGHT HE HAD A STRANGE DREAM. FOUR PILLARS AS HIGH AS THE WALLS OF HIS FORT WERE BURNING BRIGHTLY IN THE COURTYARD OF HIS PALACE.

SUDDENLY A TINY FLAME APPEARED AMIDST THE BURNING PILLARS AND...



... GREW TALLER AND TALLER TILL IT DWARFED THEM, THE FORT, THE PALACE AND ALL.



THE KING WOKE UP TREMBLING.



OH GOD!
WHAT A
DREAM!

THE NEXT MORNING HE CONSULTED SENAK, PUKKUS, KAVIND AND DEVIND, THE FOUR PANDITS OF HIS COURT.



SENAK,
WHAT DOES
MY DREAM
SIGNIFY?

ONLY GOOD,
MAHARAJ.

THE FOUR BURNING
PILLARS YOU SAW IN
YOUR DREAM
REPRESENT PUKKUS,
KAVIND, DEVIND AND
ME. AND...



... THE BRIGHT
FLAME FORETELLS
THE ADVENT OF A
GREAT SOUL WHOSE
WISDOM WILL
SURPASS OUR
COMBINED
KNOWLEDGE.



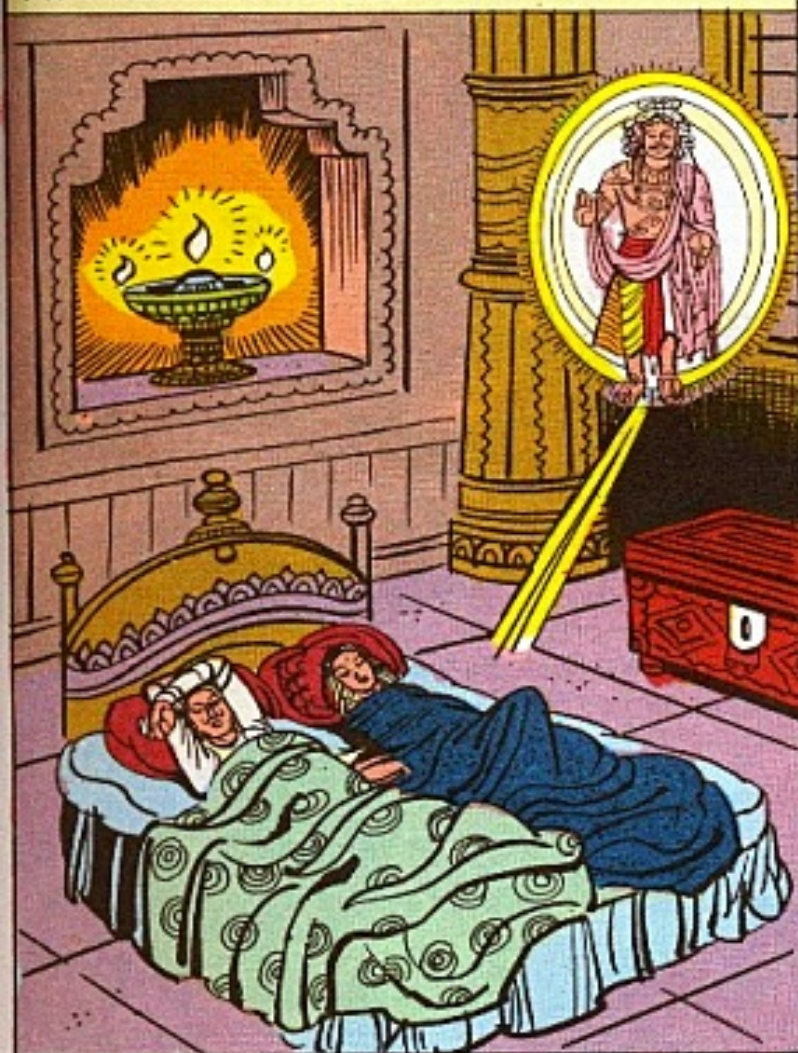
WHEN WILL THIS
GREAT SOUL BE
BORN?



YOUR DREAM
INDICATES THAT HE
ENTERED THE
WOMB OF A NOBLE
MOTHER LAST
NIGHT.



SENAK WAS RIGHT. THE BODHISATVA* HAD ENTERED THE WOMB OF SUMANA DEVI, WIFE OF SHRIVARDHANA, A WEALTHY RESIDENT OF YAVAMAJHAKA VILLAGE.



TEN MONTHS LATER, SUMANA DEVI GAVE BIRTH TO A RADIANT SON.



* SEE INTRODUCTION

SUDDENLY, THE NEWBORN BABY SPOKE IN A CLEAR, MELODIOUS VOICE.

THIS PIECE OF WOOD POSSESSES MYSTERIOUS POWERS OF HEALING.



FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, SETH SHRIVARDHANA HAD BEEN SUFFERING FROM FREQUENT BOUTS OF HEADACHE.

THE NEXT TIME I HAVE A HEADACHE I'LL TRY THIS OUT.



THE VERY NEXT DAY HE HAD ONE. HE QUICKLY BROUGHT OUT THE PIECE OF WOOD, RUBBED IT ON A GRINDING-STONE...



... AND APPLIED THE PASTE TO HIS FOREHEAD. AND LO!

IT'S GONE! MY HEADACHE HAS GONE!



I'LL MIX THIS IN WATER AND DISTRIBUTE THE MIXTURE TO THE AILING.



FAME OF THE HERB SPREAD, AND AILING PEOPLE FROM NEAR AND FAR FLOCKED TO SHRIVARDHANA'S HOUSE.



THE PAIN AND AGONY THAT TORTURED ME FOR FIVE LONG YEARS VANISHES WITH JUST ONE DOSE OF MEDICINE! I MUST BE DREAMING.

MAY THE CHILD WHO BROUGHT THIS DIVINE AUSHADHI* LIVE LONG!



WHEN THE CHILD HAD TO BE NAMED, SHRIVARDHANA MADE A DECISION.



IT IS A TRADITION IN OUR FAMILY FOR THE ELDEST SON TO BE NAMED AFTER HIS GRANDFATHER, BUT...



... SINCE OUR SON WAS BORN WITH THE MIRACULOUS AUSHADHI, WE WILL BREAK THE TRADITION AND NAME HIM MAHAUSHADHA KUMAR.



MAHAUSHADHA KUMAR GREW UP HAPPILY IN THE COMPANY OF THE CHILDREN OF HIS VILLAGE. BUT HE WAS FAR MORE INTELLIGENT AND KNOWLEDGEABLE THAN ANY OF THEM. ONE DAY, WHEN HE WAS BARELY SEVEN YEARS OLD—

AUSHADHA, THE STREETS ARE TOO CROWDED. HOW CAN WE PLAY HERE? LET'S GO INDOORS.

BUT THE RAINS WILL SOON BE HERE AND THEN WE WILL HAVE TO PLAY INDOORS ALL THE TIME.

NO, WE WILL NOT. WE'LL HAVE A NEW TOWN WITH A SHELTERED PLAYGROUND. WE'LL ASK OUR PARENTS TO DONATE THE MONEY FOR IT.

AUSHADHA KUMAR ASSEMBLED ALL THE LOCAL ARTISANS AND SPOKE TO THEM OF HIS PLANS.

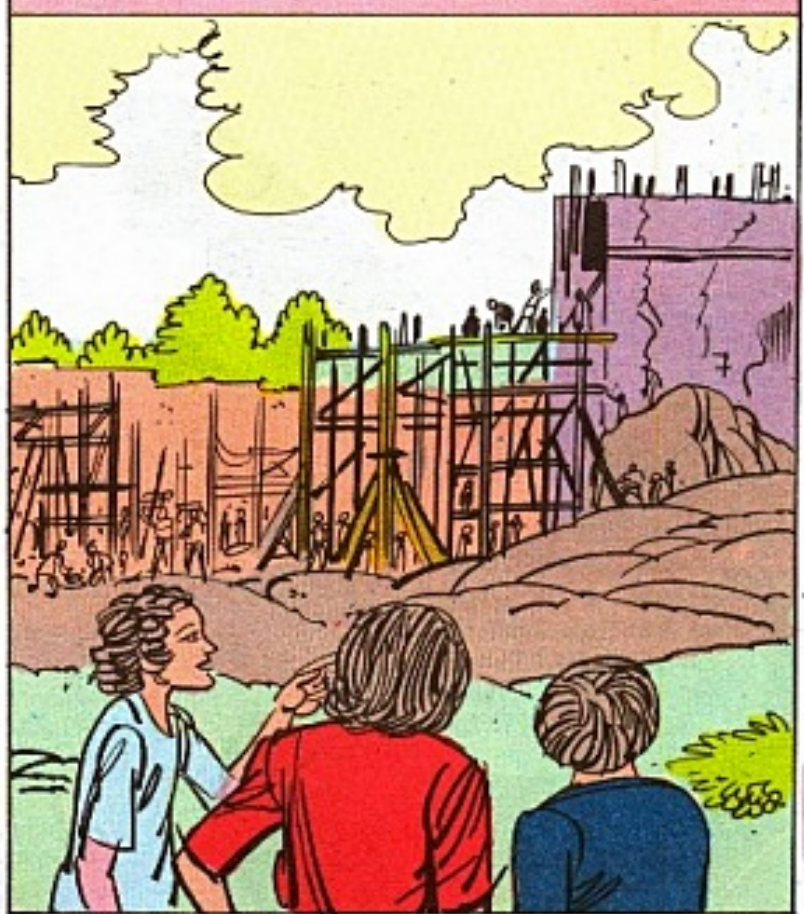
I WANT TO RAISE A TOWNSHIP WHICH WILL HAVE A STADIUM FOR CHILDREN, A HOME FOR HOMELESS WOMEN...

... REST-HOUSES FOR TRAVELLERS AND MENDICANTS, AND PUBLIC HALLS FOR PRAYERS AND SETTLING DISPUTES.

THE SIMPLE ARTISANS OF YAVAMAJJHAKA VILLAGE WERE UNABLE TO VISUALIZE AUSHADHA KUMAR'S IDEAS. SO HE MADE A PLAN OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR THEM. AND...



...WORK BEGAN AND PROGRESSED QUICKLY YET SMOOTHLY UNDER HIS SUPERVISION. AND...



...BEFORE LONG THE CHILDREN HAD AN EXCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND WITH SHELTERED SECTIONS WHERE THEY COULD PLAY WHEN IT RAINED. DESTITUTE WOMEN AND MENDICANTS AND TRAVELLERS ALIKE BLESSED THEIR BENEFACTOR, AUSHADHA KUMAR.



THE PEOPLE OF YAVAMAJJHAKA WERE SO IMPRESSED WITH AUSHADHA KUMAR THAT THEY OFTEN ASKED HIM TO SETTLE THEIR DISPUTES.

ONE DAY —



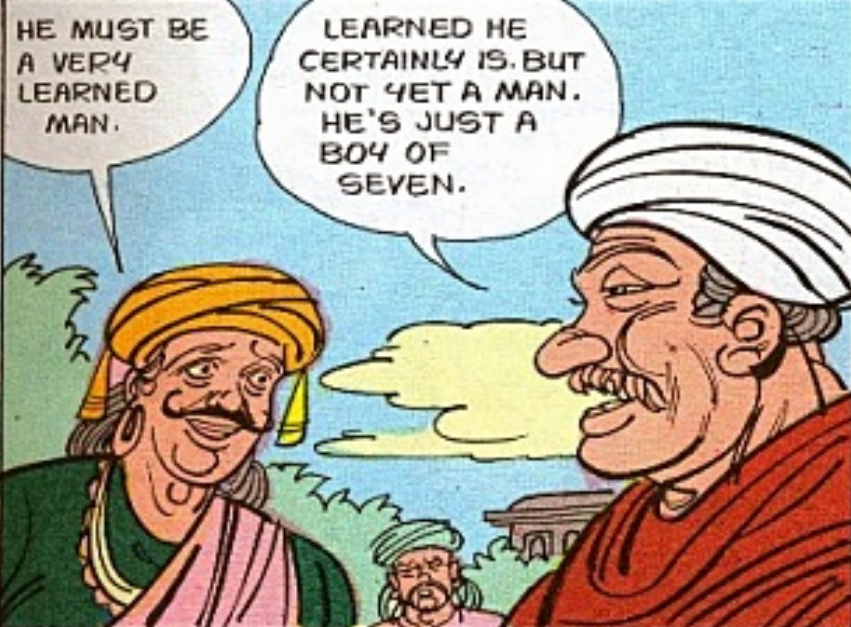
MEANWHILE, AS SEVERAL YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE GREAT PANDIT WAS PREDICTED, KING VAIDEHA DECIDED TO SEEK HIM OUT.



... CAME TO CHAVAMAJHAKA.



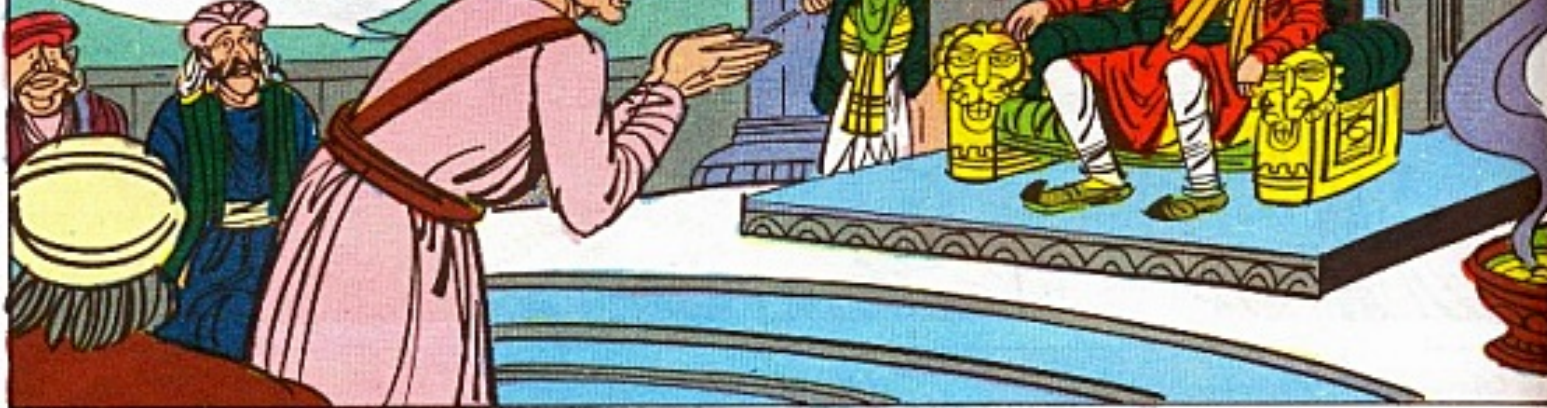
HE MUST BE A VERY LEARNED MAN.



THE MINISTER'S MESSENGER SPED TO MITHILA.

MAHARAJ, THE MINISTER IS CONVINCED THAT SEVEN-YEAR-OLD AUSHADHA KUMAR OF YAVAMAJJHAKA IS THE CHILD YOU ARE LOOKING FOR.

I HAD MY DREAM ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO!



SENAK PANDIT, I THINK WE SHOULD INVITE AUSHADHA KUMAR TO MITHILA.



WHAT IF HE IS THE SOUL WHOSE WISDOM WILL SURPASS OUR KNOWLEDGE?



I AM NOT SO SURE, MAHARAJ. PLANNING A TOWNSHIP IS NO CRITERION OF WISDOM OR OF THE GREATNESS OF A SOUL.

YOU ARE RIGHT.



ASK THE MINISTER TO OBSERVE AUSHADHA KUMAR FOR A FEW MORE DAYS AND TO REPORT ANYTHING UNUSUAL HE SEES.

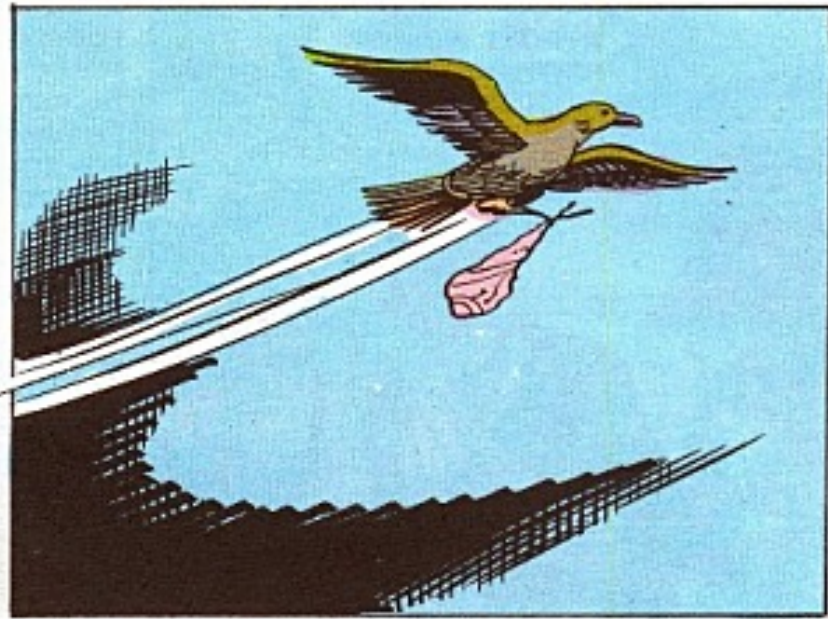
AS YOU COMMAND, MAHARAJ.



THE MINISTER DID AS HE WAS ORDERED.
THEN ONE DAY —



HEY! THIEF!
THIEF!



OH, GOD! WHAT SHALL
I DO? A WHOLE
LEG OF MUTTON
GONE!



DON'T LOOK SO
DEJECTED. I'LL
GET IT BACK
FOR YOU.

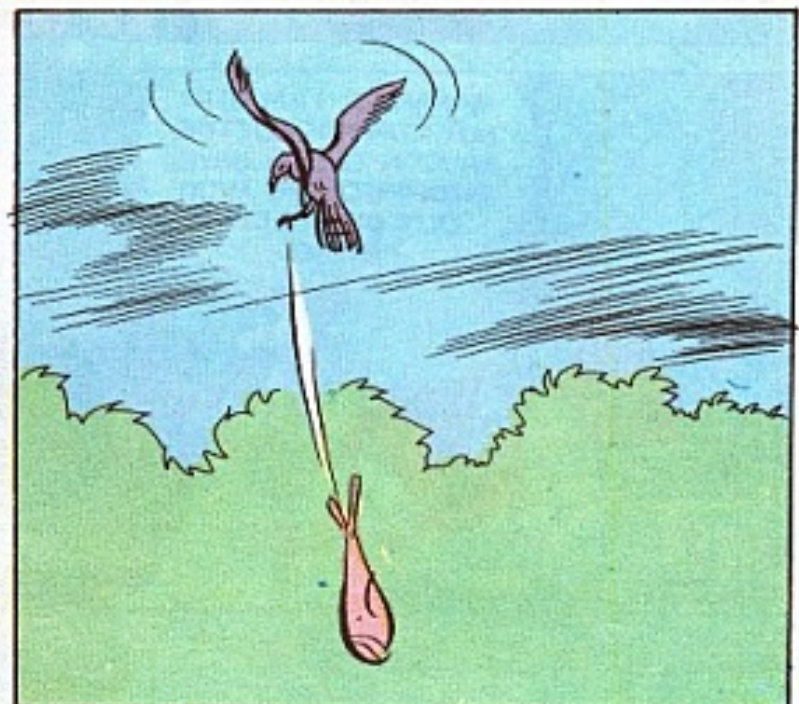


AUSHADHA KUMAR RUSHED LIKE
THE WIND ...



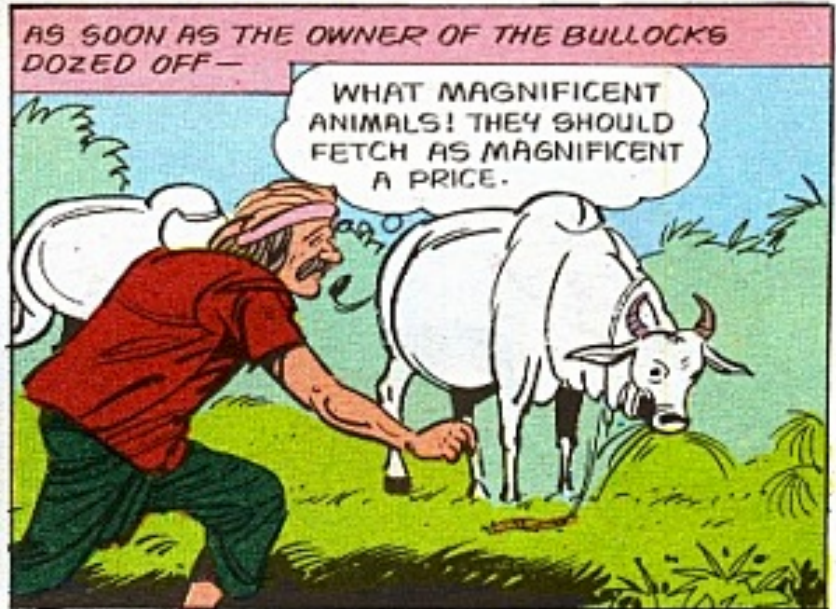
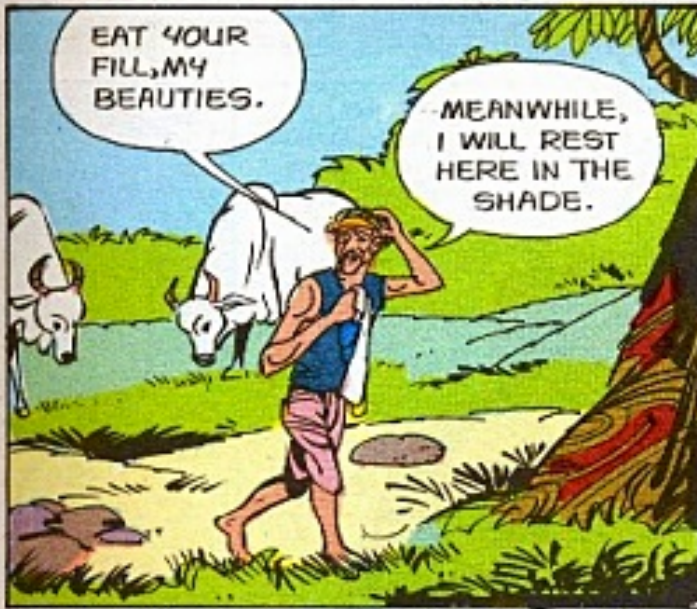
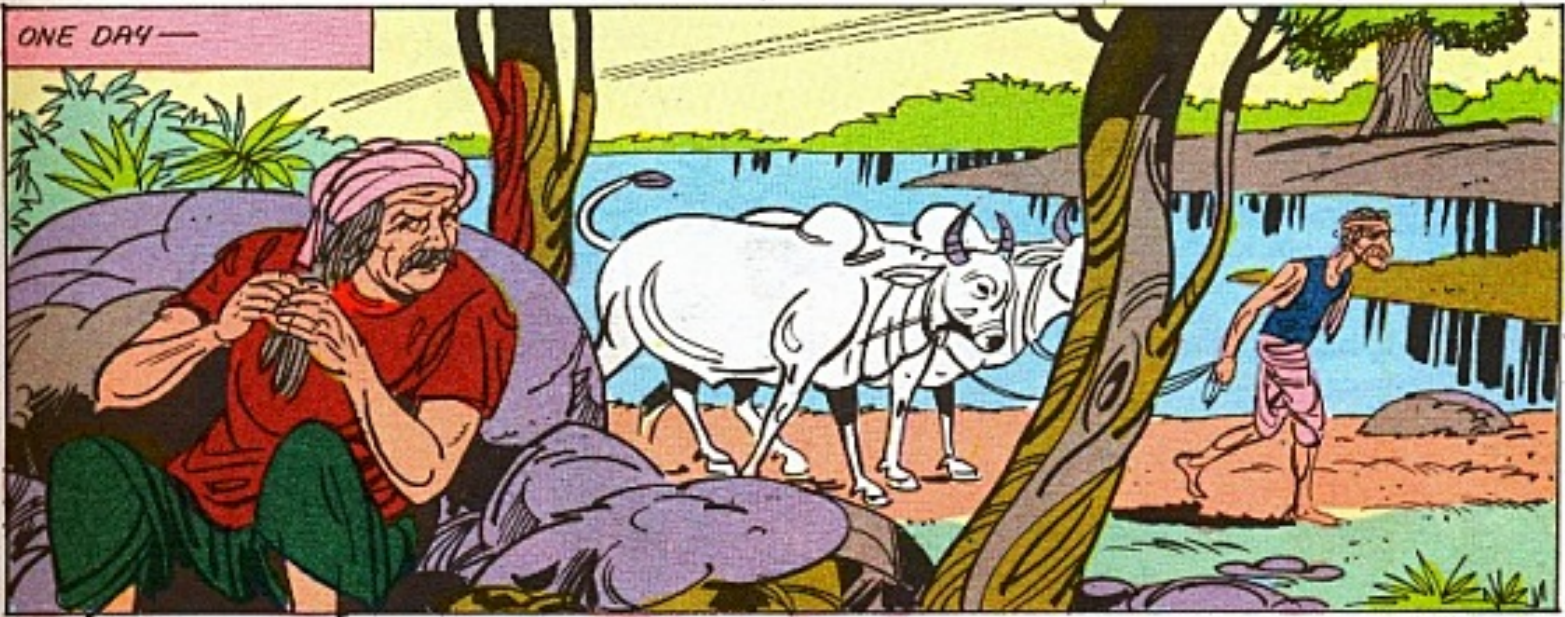
...TILL HE WAS RIGHT BELOW
THE SHADOW OF THE FALCON.
AND —

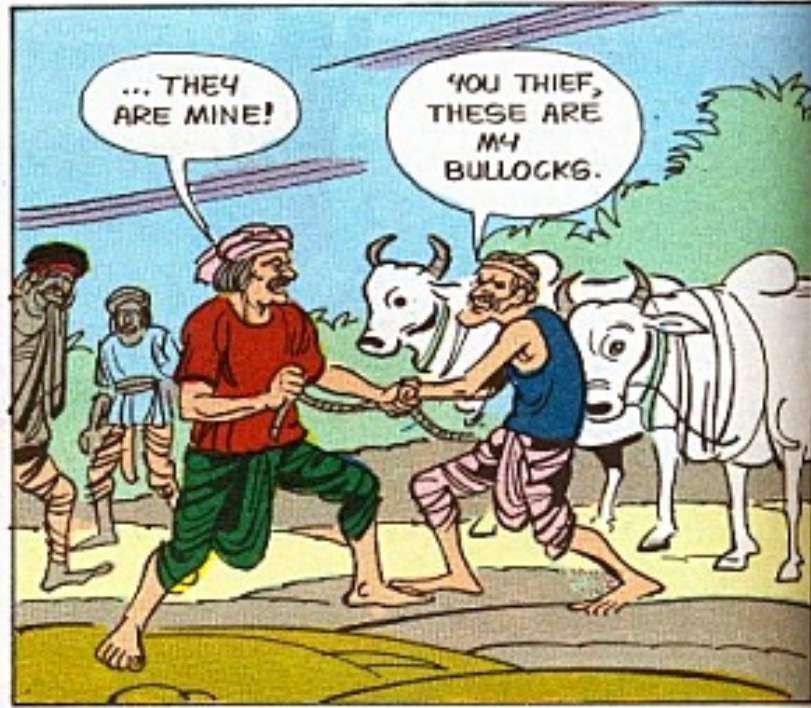
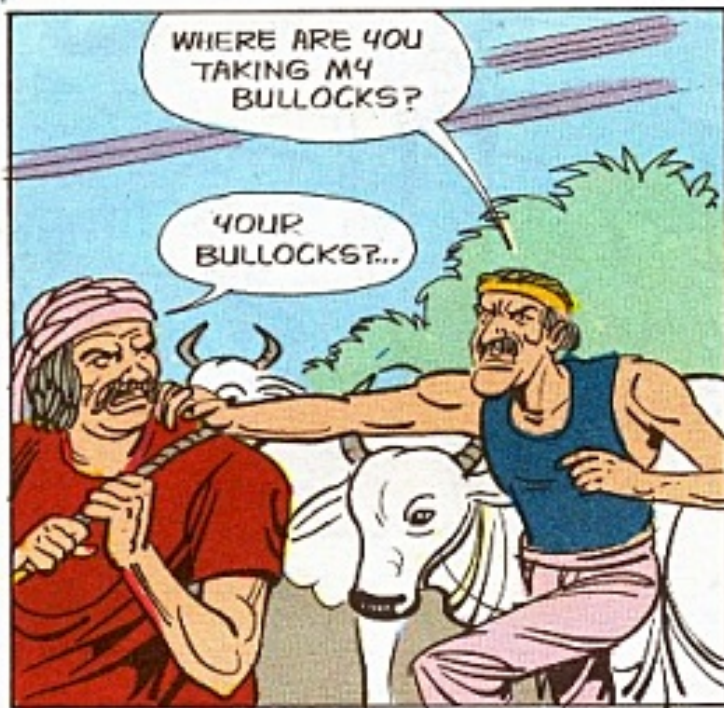
DROP THAT
MEAT AT
ONCE!





ONE DAY —





HIS BULLOCKS? HA! HOW COULD HE RAISE SUCH FINE, HEALTHY BULLOCKS WHEN HE HIMSELF IS SO SKINNY?

YOU ARE RIGHT. THE BULLOCKS ARE HEALTHY.

WHAT DO YOU FEED THEM TO MAKE THEM SO ROBUST?

OH, MASTER, I FEED THEM YAVAGU*, SESAMUM LADDOOS AND UDAD®.

AND YOU MY FRIEND, IF AS YOU CLAIM THESE ARE YOUR BULLOCKS, WHAT SPECIAL FEED DO YOU GIVE THEM?

I AM A POOR MAN. I CAN'T AFFORD SPECIAL FOOD. I FEED THEM ORDINARY HAQ.

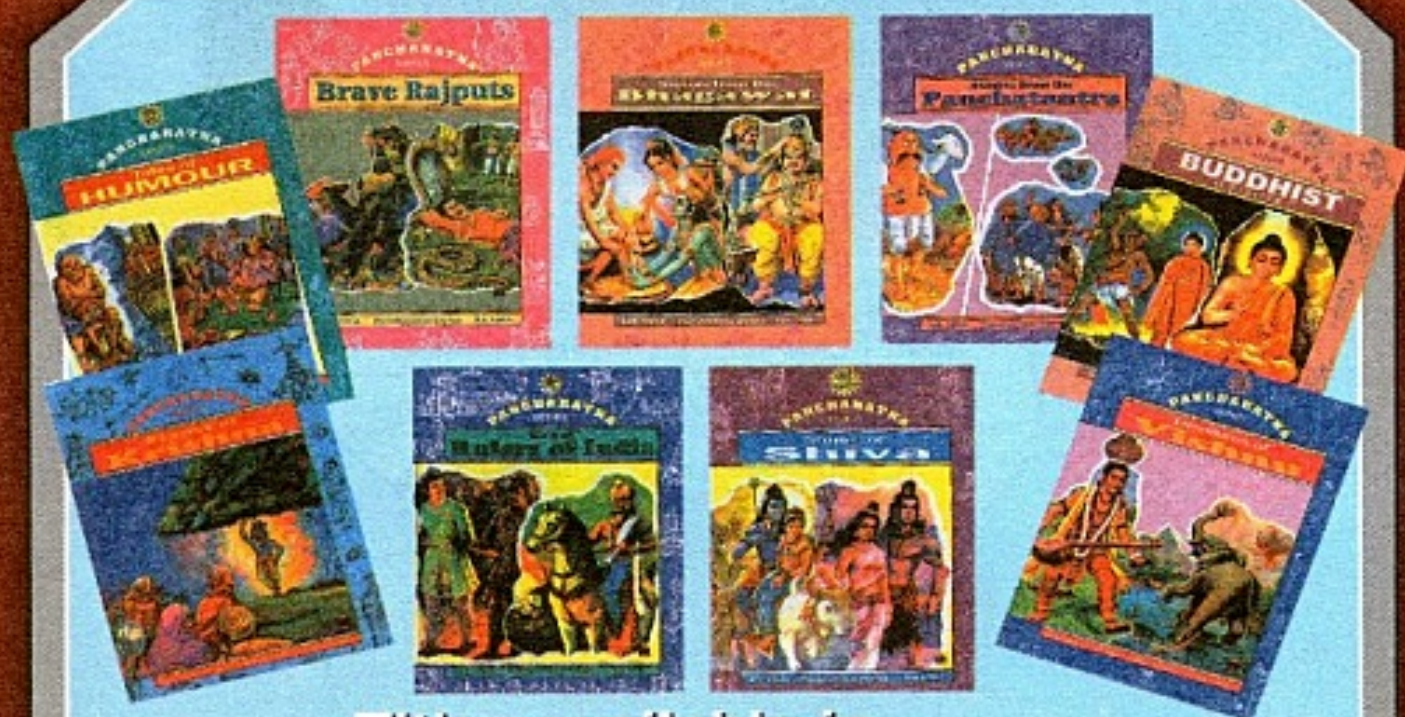
FRIENDS, GRIND A PASTE OF MUSTARD LEAVES AND FEED IT TO THE BULLOCKS.



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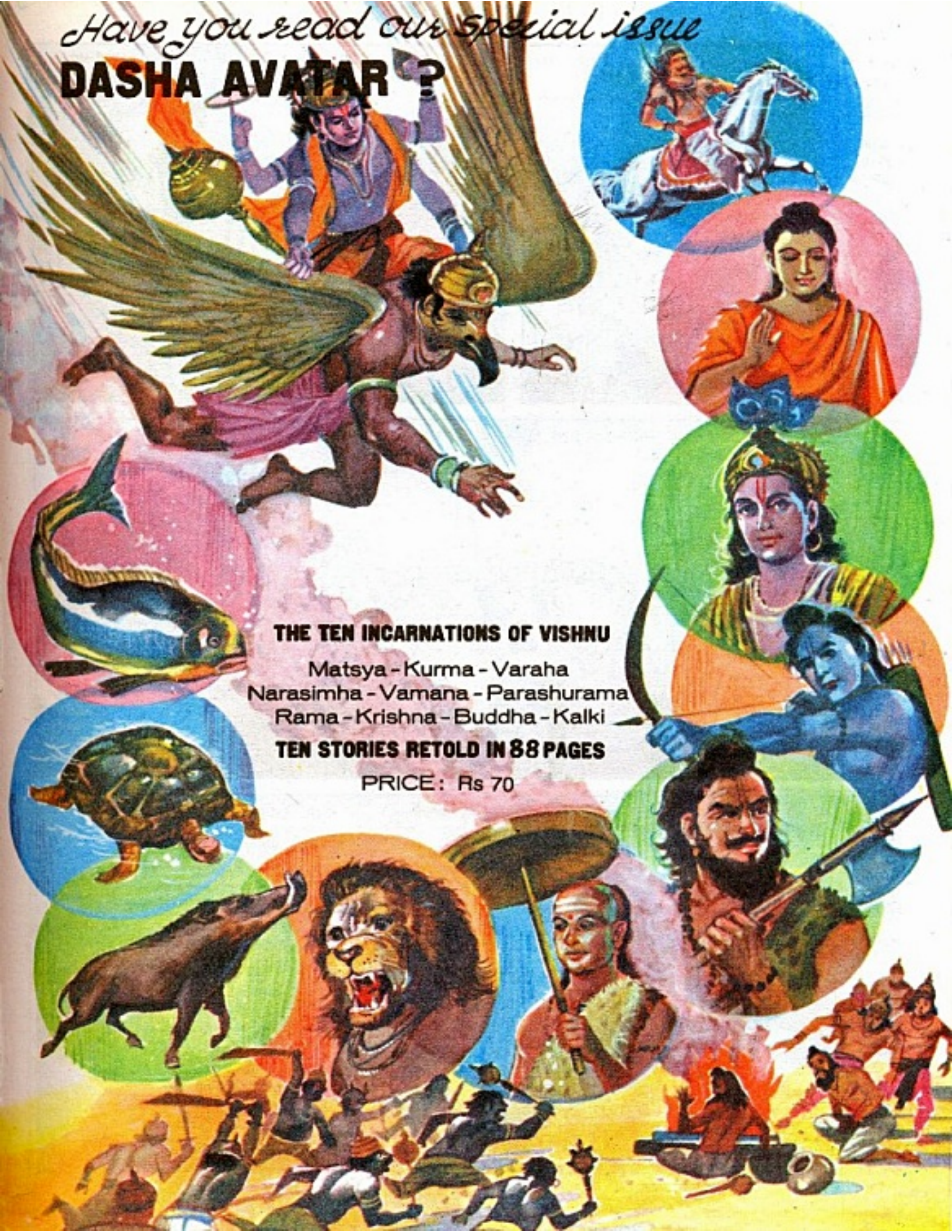
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THE PASTE OF MUSTARD LEAVES HAD THE DESIRED LAXATIVE EFFECT.

NOW EXAMINE THE DUNG DROPPED BY THE BULLOCKS.



...DO YOU FIND ANY GRAINS OF BARLEY, SESAMUM OR UDAD?

NO! NOT A SINGLE ONE.



SO, YOU FEED YAVAGU AND UDAD TO THE BULLOCKS. DO YOU?

YOU ARE A THIEF!

4-YES... I MEAN NO, MASTER.

NO... NO... YES...



ENRAGED BY SUCH RANK DECEIT, AUSHADHA KUMAR'S FRIENDS BEAT UP THE MAN.



THEN—

THE BULLOCKS ARE YOURS, FRIEND. YOU MAY LEAD THEM AWAY.



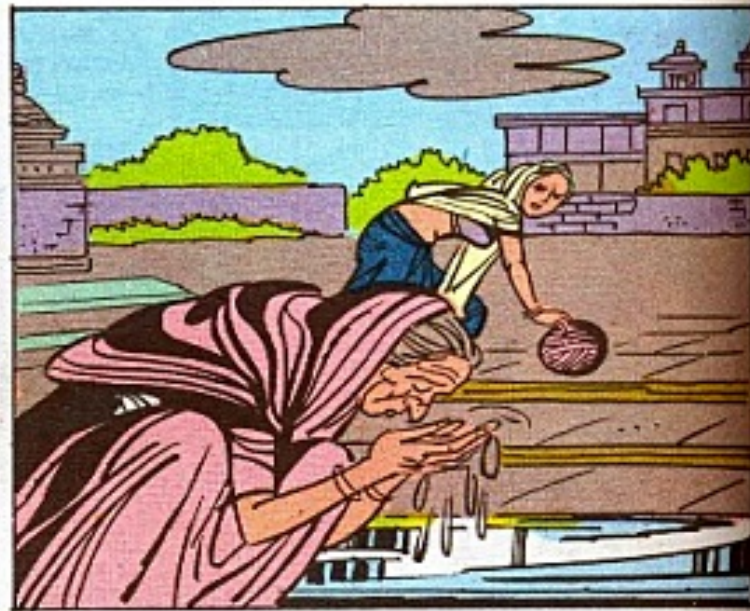
BUT WHEN THE TALE OF THE BULLOCKS WAS NARRATED IN THE COURT OF VAIDEHA —

MAHARAJ, ANYONE WITH COMMON SENSE CAN SOLVE SUCH A PROBLEM.

AND THE MINISTER WAS ASKED TO CONTINUE HIS VIGIL AT CHAYAMAJHAKA.

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE CASE OF AN OLD WOMAN WORKING IN A COTTON FIELD PRESENTED THE MINISTER WITH YET ANOTHER INSTANCE OF AUSHADHA KUMAR'S WISDOM.





THE TWO WOMEN WERE BROUGHT TO AUSHADHA KUMAR.

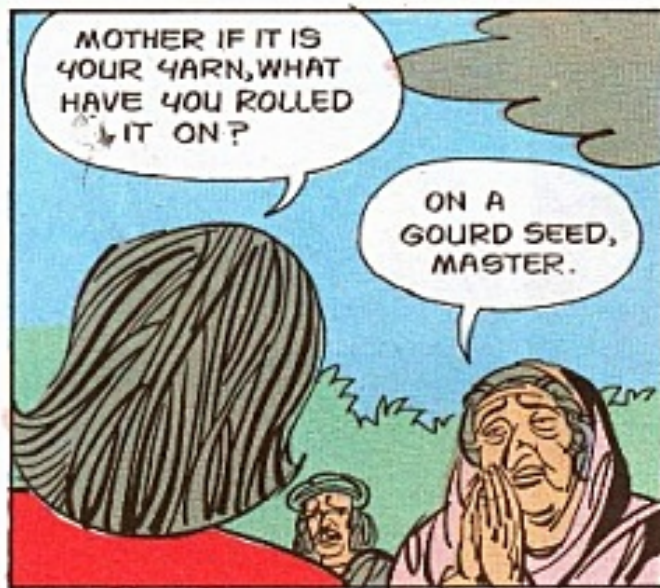


THE EVER ALERT MINISTER WATCHED THE PROCEEDINGS.



AUSHADHA KUMAR STUDIED THE WOMEN CAREFULLY.





WHEN THE TALE REACHED MITHILA, THE PANDITS YET AGAIN REFUSED TO ADMIT THAT AUSHADHA KUMAR WAS ENDOWED WITH EXCEPTIONAL WISDOM.



IN THIS MANNER ON SEVEN OCCASIONS DID THE PANDITS OF MITHILA DISPUTE THE WISDOM OF AUSHADHA KUMAR TO STALL HIS INDUCTION INTO THE COURT. BUT VAIDEHA WAS TENACIOUS.



HE HAD THE TAPERING STEM OF A SAPLING CUT AND SHAPED INTO A PERFECT CYLINDER.



THE PIECE OF WOOD WAS SENT TO SETH SHRIVARDHANA'S HOUSE.

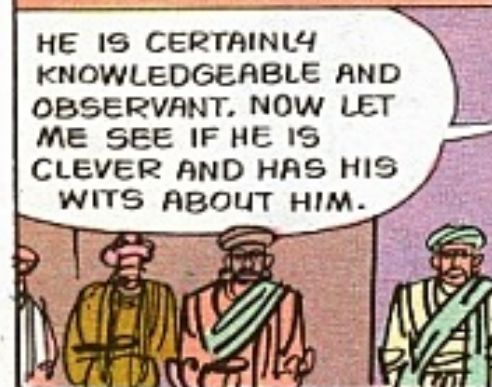


LET ME TRY.





WHILE THE FOUR PANDITS
WERE DOWNCAST BY THE
RESULTS OF THE FIRST
TEST, THE KING WAS
DELIGHTED. AUSHADHA HAD
WON THE FIRST ROUND WITH
FULL MARKS.





WHEN THE KING HEARD THE COUNTER DEMAND —



REMARKABLE!
THE BOY IS
EXTRAORDINARY!

KING VAIDEHA POSED SEVERAL SUCH COMPLEX PROBLEMS WHICH PUT AUSHADHA KUMAR'S WITS SEVERELY TO THE TEST. FINALLY —

AUSHADHA KUMAR IS BEYOND DOUBT A GREAT SOUL. I SHALL NOW INVITE HIM TO JOIN MY COURT.

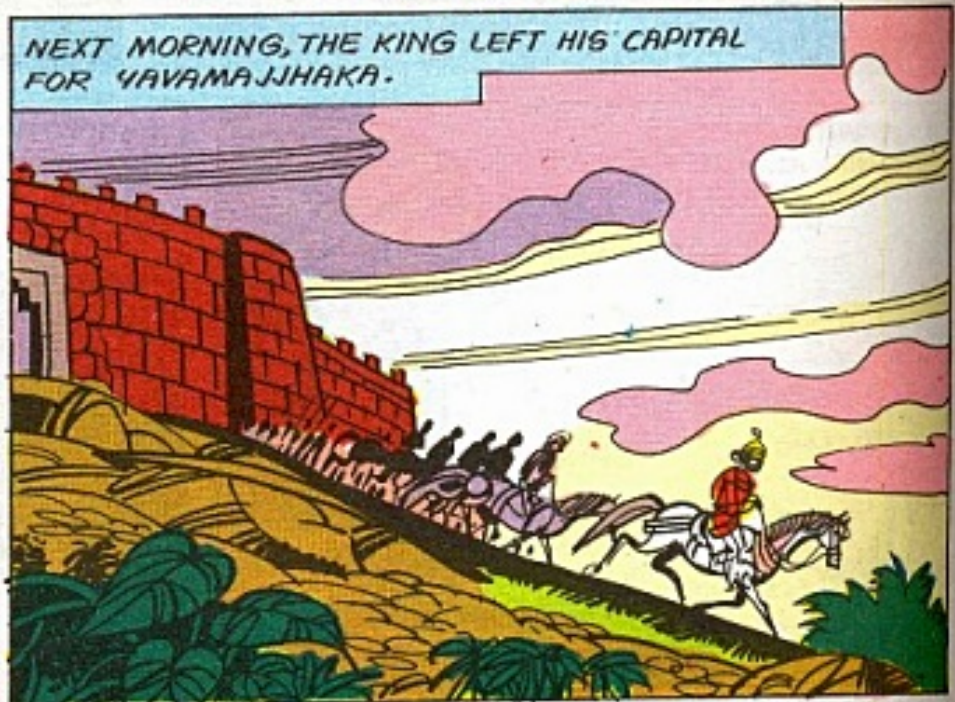
BUT, MAHARAJ...



NOW I SHALL GO AND FETCH THE GREAT PANDIT HERE MYSELF.



NEXT MORNING, THE KING LEFT HIS CAPITAL FOR YAVAMAJHAKA.

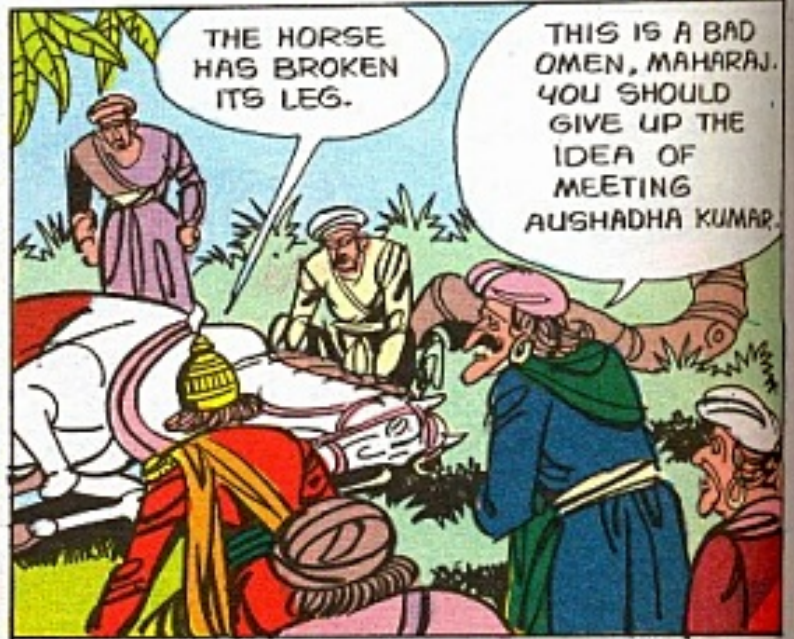


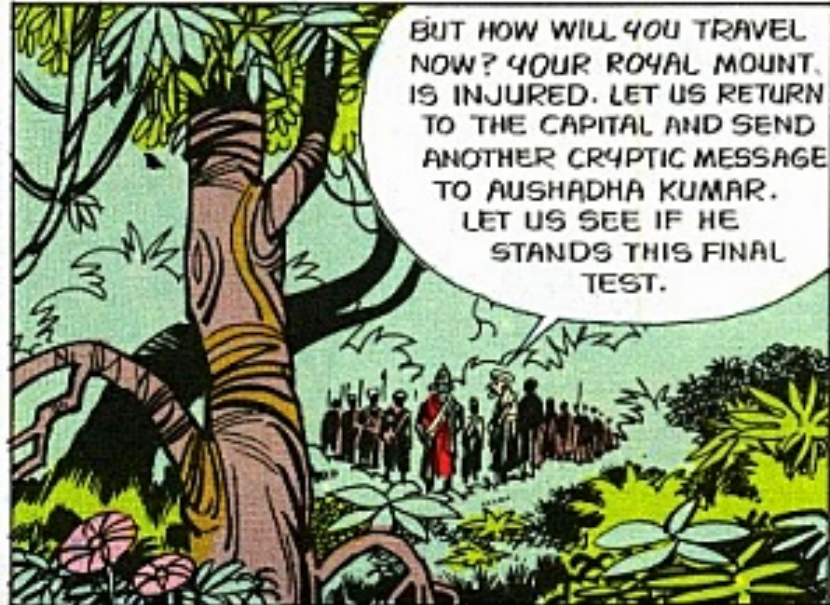
HOWEVER ON THE WAY —



THE HORSE HAS BROKEN ITS LEG.

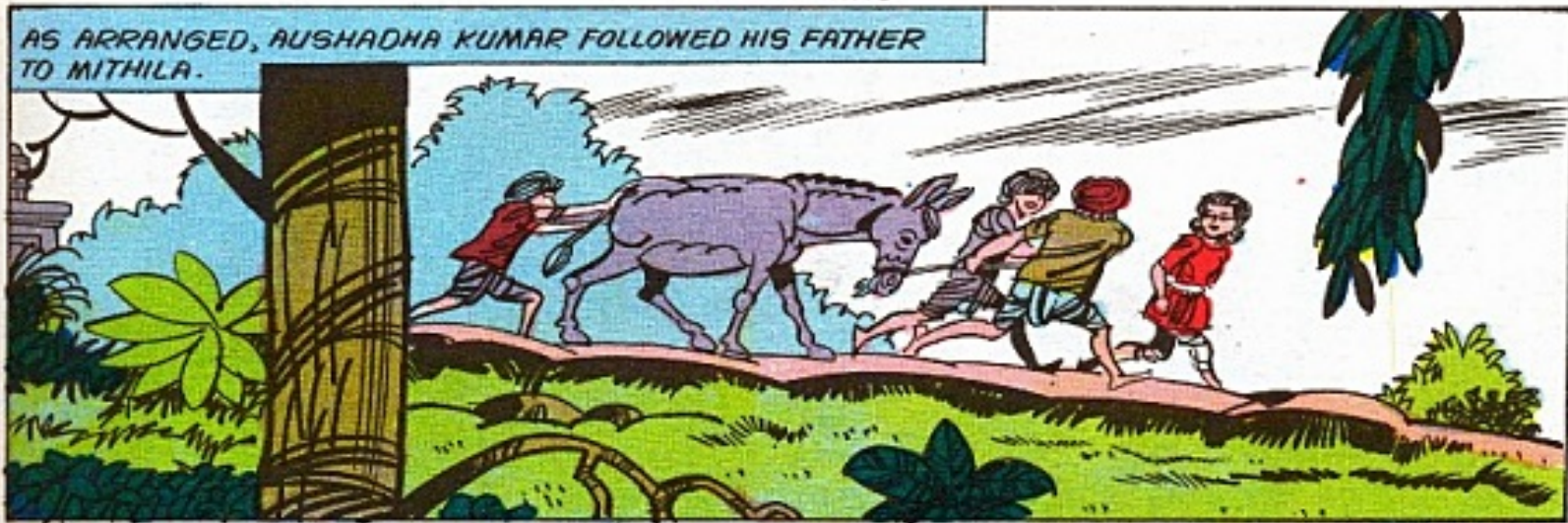
THIS IS A BAD OMEN, MAHARAJ. YOU SHOULD GIVE UP THE IDEA OF MEETING AUSHADHA KUMAR.







AS ARRANGED, AUSHADHA KUMAR FOLLOWED HIS FATHER TO MITHILA.



WHEN AUSHADHA KUMAR REACHED THE COURT —







